

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed construction of the City of Gulf Breeze's Wastewater Treatment Facility, Santa Rosa County, Florida (FEMA-1551-DR-FL)

Interested parties are hereby notified that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is considering providing funds through the Public Assistance (PA) Program to assist in constructing a wastewater treatment facility and installation of a transmission system. An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended; and the Regulations for Implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500 to 1508). This Draft EA summarizes the purpose and need of the proposed project and addresses a number of topics including feasible alternatives that were considered, environmental impacts of the alternatives, and mitigation of adverse impacts.

The City of Gulf Breeze has determined that a new wastewater treatment facility is needed in order to accommodate projected growth and the resulting increased need in Santa Rosa County. The existing South Santa Rosa Utility wastewater treatment facility, located in South Santa Rosa County, was designed in the 1980s to treat 2.0 million gallons per day of wastewater (MGD). Population and customer growth is expected to result in the capacity of the wastewater treatment facility being exceeded by need near the end of 2013 or beginning of 2014. Additionally, many of the Santa Rosa County residents are currently on septic systems, which are impacting local groundwater and the surface waters of the East Bay of Pensacola Bay. Construction of a new wastewater treatment facility would allow current residents to decommission these septic tanks/drain fields and allow new development to utilize the treatment facility, thereby avoiding the need to install additional septic systems within the area. These factors would result in the improvement of groundwater quality and surface drainages, including water quality in East Bay.

The wastewater treatment facility would be capable of treating 1.5 MGD, with a planned increase of another 1.5 MGD at an unspecified date. It would consist of a 25-acre facility constructed on a 42-acre parcel of property owned by the City and currently being used as a spray field for wastewater effluent disposal. This property is located at latitude 30.4143, longitude -86.9734, bordered by Bergren Road (west), River Branch Road (south and east), and Clay Circle (north). The wastewater treatment facility would require the installation of a gravity line sewer system within the rights-of-way of Bergren Road and Clay Circle, adjacent to the 42-acre property. Effluent discharge would be land applied at the Santa Rosa County Utility System's existing wastewater treatment facility's spray field ERS-4.

The following summarizes what is outlined in the EA as conditions that must be met as part of implementing this proposed action.

1. The applicant and their contractors must comply with all applicable permit and project conditions, including, but not limited to those required by the FL DEP permit (FLA399850-001-DW1P/NP); the FL DEP Wetland Resource Permit (WRP 57-0272487-001-DE); and USACE permit [SAJ-2007-386 (NW-SWA)].
2. Per Santa Rosa County ordinances, all structures within the wastewater treatment facility must be less than 35 feet in height; a 100-foot wide landscape buffer must be installed at the property perimeter.
3. To minimize any possible adverse impacts to cultural resources, an archaeologist must be present to monitor any ground disturbing activities in the vicinity of Sites 8SR1913 and SR1914. Should significant cultural features or artifacts be discovered during archaeological monitoring, the archaeologist doing the monitoring shall be empowered to redirect construction activities away from the area. Any cultural resources discovered as a result of the project must be reinterred on site, as close as possible to the location of discovery. A field report documenting the monitoring and any discoveries will be required at project close-out.
4. In the event that fortuitous finds or unexpected discoveries, such as prehistoric or historic artifacts, including pottery or ceramics, stone tools or metal implements, or other physical remains that could be associated with North American cultures or early colonial or American settlement are encountered at any time within the project area, the project shall cease all activities involving subsurface disturbance in the immediate vicinity of such discoveries. If the excavation process uncovers items, or evidence thereof, which might be of archaeological, historic, or architectural interest, the City of Gulf Breeze must require its designated contractors to stop work immediately; notify FEMA, the SHPO, and the appropriate THPO; and take all reasonable measures to protect the items in a manner sufficient to avoid additional harm until the significance of the discovery can be determined.
5. In the event that any human remains are unearthed, all work will stop immediately and the area shall be secured in accordance with local, state, and federal statutes.

Failure to comply with permit and project conditions could jeopardize FEMA funding.

FEMA has determined that the proposed action to construct a wastewater treatment facility will have no significant adverse impact on the quality of the biological or human environments. It is important that we receive your input on the Draft EA to ensure that all relevant issues and concerns of the residents of Santa Rosa County are considered and addressed. Copies of the Draft EA may be viewed at the following locations:

Santa Rosa County

Gulf Breeze City Hall

South Annex Building
Mr. Jim Ward
5819 Gulf Breeze Parkway
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563
(850-983-1977)

City Clerks Office
Ms. Marita Rhodes
1070 Shoreline Drive
Gulf Breeze, FL 32562
850-934-5135

Santa Rosa County, Clerk of Courts
Ms. Christin Rowell
6495 Carolynne Street
Suite A
Milton, FL 32570
850-981-5535

The Draft EA is also available online at FEMA's website
<http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region4.shtm>

You may provide your comments on the EA by mailing, faxing, or emailing them to the following address:

Richard Myers, Environmental Liaison Officer
Federal Emergency Management Agency
36 Skyline Drive
Lake Mary, FL 32746
Email: richard.myers@dhs.gov
Fax: 407-268-8977

Comments must be received by August 28, 2009. If no substantive comments are received following agency and public review, the Draft EA will be considered the Final EA and no additional information or modifications will be incorporated. We look forward to your input.